

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Programs
Processed Products Branch

QUESTION & ANSWER SHEET (8/19/05)

1. When will this downsizing occur?

It could begin as early as October 2005. We anticipate this happening over a period of time.

2. When will I know if I will be affected by this downsizing?

As soon as we know the staffing needs at the various processing plants based on the program chosen (e.g., continuous, plant-assisted continuous, quality assurance program, etc.), we will determine the optimal staffing level. If you are affected, you will be informed as soon as possible.

3. Could I pursue employment at the plant to which I am currently assigned?

Ethics regulations prohibit employees from negotiating for/seeking employment at the plant at which they are assigned to avoid any conflicts of interest. All plants that would like to hire current PPB employees will be asked to provide PPB with a list of employees they desire to enter into negotiations for employment. PPB will act as an intermediary between current PPB employees and the plants.

4. Will there be a buy-out?

No. This requires OPM approval and will not be pursued.

5. Will early-out retirements be offered?

PPB is seeking to obtain voluntary early retirement authority (VERA). VERA allows any employee who is 50 years old and has 20 years of service or any employee with 25 years of service to voluntarily retire. There are annuity reductions for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees who are less than 55 years old.

6. Where can I find out more information about Government jobs within Florida?

Please check out the following web site on a frequent basis:

http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/agency_search.asp.

For other jobs within USDA, including AMS and APHIS, please go to:

www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/job_opps/find_job.html.

7. Where can I get help in writing a resume?

Noel DiProspero, PPB Training Officer, is available to help you. You may contact her at Noel.DiProspero@usda.gov or at (202) 720-9897.

8. Where can I obtain more information on the Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP)?

A. www.usda.gov/da/employ/apspd/bul3305.htm which is USDA Personnel Bulletin No. 330-5, USDA Career Transition Assistance Plan, dated September 24, 1997.

B. <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/directives/pdf/MRP4330-1.pdf> which is MRP Directive 4330-1, Career Transition Assistance Plan, dated December 18, 1998;

- C. www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr_desk_guide/4330/index.html which is MRP Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4330—Career Transition Assistance Plan, dated November 1998.
9. Who is my contact if I would like more information about retirement, TSP, and life and health insurance?
- Barbara Johnson is the PPB contact at HRO in Minneapolis. She may be reached at (612) 336-3312 or 1-888-616-7595, or via e-mail at: <mailto:Barbara.j.johnson@aphis.usda.gov>.
10. Who can I contact for questions about non-benefits matters?
- Tracy Traxler is the PPB contact at HRO in Minneapolis. She may be reached at (612) 336-3368 or via e-mail at Tracy.Traxler@aphis.usda.gov.
11. Are there any other benefits that AMS provides to its employees?
- Yes. WorkLife4You offers counseling, education and referrals that can help you better manage your personal and work responsibilities. The Employee Assistance Program, which provides an important, comprehensive counseling service, is still available and can be accessed using the same telephone number (1-800-222-0364). WorkLife4You provides more personalized services of a general nature related to family, health and wellness, education, financial/legal and daily life. Internet access is available at: www.worklife4you.com. To register, please use “USDAAMS” as the Company Code and your first name + your last name + the last 4 digits of your social security number (e.g., JOHNDOE1234) as your Employee ID. If you have any problems getting registered, please contact the WorkLife4You help desk at 888-604-9565.